

George Mason University
Department of History and Art History

Dr. Jennifer Ritterhouse
Email: jritterh@gmu.edu
Office: Robinson Hall B, 375C
Office hours: Mondays, 12-2 p.m. and by appt.

Spring 2012
Wednesdays, 7:20-10 p.m.
Nguyen Engr. Bldg. 1109

History 615, Section 001: The South Since 1865

"What is southern history? More to the point, what is 'the South'?" So begins Laura Edwards's essay, "Southern History as U.S. History," written to mark the 75th anniversary of *The Journal of Southern History* in 2009. This course examines the history of the American South from the end of the Civil War to the end of the 20th century, starting with such fundamental questions as whether and in what ways "the South" was distinctive in the history of the United States. We will begin by exploring the nature of southern society at the point of emancipation, then examine how white southerners reestablished their political, economic, and cultural dominance. Readings on mass culture, memory, southern progressivism, and racial violence will bring us to the period when the "solid South" began to crack: namely, the New Deal era. Recent scholarship on "the long civil rights movement" will frame our study of the South in the second half of the twentieth century, culminating in analyses of the new "Sunbelt."

Throughout the course, we will employ gender as a category of analysis along with region, race, and class. We will also study historiography in addition to history and work to improve students' own analytical and writing skills.

Required books: (Available at campus store; see course schedule for additional readings)

Steven Hahn, *A Nation Under Our Feet: Black Political Struggles in the Rural South from Slavery to the Great Migration* (2003).

Glenda Gilmore, *Gender & Jim Crow: Women and the Politics of White Supremacy in North Carolina, 1896-1920* (1996).

C. Vann Woodward, *Strange Career of Jim Crow* (Commemorative edition, 2001).

Karen Cox, *Dreaming of Dixie: How the South Was Created in American Popular Culture* (2011).

Nancy MacLean, *Behind the Mask of Chivalry: The Making of the Second Ku Klux Klan* (1995).

Crystal Feimster, *Southern Horrors: Women and the Politics of Rape and Lynching* (2009).

Robert Korstad, *Civil Rights Unionism: Tobacco Workers and the Struggle for Democracy in the Mid-Twentieth-Century South* (2003).

Charles Payne, *I've Got the Light of Freedom: The Organizing Tradition and the Mississippi Freedom Struggle* (1995).

Susan Ashmore, *Carry It On: The War on Poverty and the Civil Rights Movement in Alabama, 1964-1972* (2008).

Matthew Lassiter, *The Silent Majority: Suburban Politics in the Sunbelt South* (2007).

Bethany Moreton, *To Serve God and Wal-Mart: The Making of Christian Free Enterprise* (2010)

Recommended book:

Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations* (7th ed.)

Note: I expect you to use Chicago-style citations and include a bibliography in all written assignments for this course.

Course requirements and grading:

- Active, informed, & thoughtful participation & submission of discussion questions (30%)
- Take-home midterm, 5-7 pages, due by email attachment by 7:20pm on March 21 (20%)
- 1000-word book review and oral presentation (20%)
- Final essay, due by email attachment by 5pm on May 4 (10-12 pages) (30%)

Participation and discussion questions: I expect students to read each week's assignment thoroughly and come to class prepared to ask questions, raise issues, and engage in a thought-provoking conversation. I will do my best to judge participation more on the intellectual quality than on the sheer quantity of a student's comments, but quantity is also important: students who are eager to talk demonstrate familiarity with the readings and provide intellectual stimulation for the whole group.

Students may also contribute to their participation grade by submitting a one-paragraph summary and 3-5 discussion questions on any assigned book or article for any number of weeks during the semester. These are due by email to jritterh@gmu.edu by noon on the day we are to discuss that reading. Because I intend to incorporate students' questions into my own discussion planning, I will not accept late submissions for participation credit. Nor should any student expect to make an A for the participation portion of the grade based on written submissions alone, even if s/he submits something every week. Meanwhile, it is possible to make an A in participation without submitting any summaries and discussion questions at all. My point: graduate seminars favor those who engage orally and think on their feet, not just on paper, and this class is designed to foster those skills.

I will give every student a preliminary participation grade along with my comments on the take-home midterm.

Take-home midterm: On February 29, I will provide 2-3 essay questions designed to encourage you to synthesize our first several weeks of readings. I expect your essays to be 5-7 double-spaced pages in length, with Chicago-style endnotes. Because some students may be doing the book review assignment at this point in the semester, I am allowing two weeks, plus spring break, for the completion of the midterm essay, which is due by email on March 21.

Book review and oral presentation: This assignment is designed to improve our individual and collective knowledge of the historiography of southern history. For nine weeks of the semester (February 22-April 25), one student per class will give an oral presentation and turn in a 1000-word review of a book not listed on our syllabus. First, I will ask you to rank topics/dates. Once I have assigned you a topic/date, you should read the recommended essay or essays for that week and choose a scholarly book discussed therein. Locate and read that book as well as the regularly assigned reading for the week. Your 1000-review can be comparative, if that makes sense, or it can focus solely on your chosen reading. Your oral presentation should last no more than 15 minutes and should focus only on the additional reading, introducing it to your classmates and putting it into historiographical context based on the essay you read. Both your essay and your presentation are due by email attachment by 7:20 p.m. on your assigned date. It will be virtually impossible for you to make up for a missed presentation, so think carefully as you rank your preferred topics/dates. I will do my best to give everyone their first choice.

Final essay: Like the midterm, the final essay is meant to be a synthesis of course readings, with the addition of at least three more books you have identified by reading one or more of our recommended historiographical essays. I expect this essay of 10-12 double-spaced pages to be based on at least eight books total. A bibliography of the readings you expect to discuss is due in class on April 25. While I will help you identify major themes that appear throughout our readings, I will probably leave it up to you to define a topic for your paper (instead of providing essay prompts, as for the midterm).

Course schedule and readings:

January 25 Course introduction

Laura F. Edwards, "Southern History as U.S. History," *Journal of Southern History* 75 (August 2009), 533-64 (e-journal)

February 1 Slavery and the Structure of Southern Society

Hahn, *A Nation Under Our Feet*, pp. 1-313

February 8 Reconstruction and the Triumph of White Supremacy

Hahn, *A Nation Under Our Feet*, pp. 317-476

Gilmore, *Gender & Jim Crow*, pp. xv-146

February 15 Historiography and the Origins of Segregation

Woodward, *Strange Career of Jim Crow*

Howard Rabinowitz, "More Than the Woodward Thesis: Assessing *The Strange Career of Jim Crow*," and C. Vann Woodward, "Strange Career Critics: Long May They Persevere," *Journal of American History* 75 (December 1988), 842-68 (e-journal)

Jennifer Ritterhouse, "The Etiquette of Race Relations in the Jim Crow South," in *Manners and Southern History*, ed. by Ted Ownby (2007)

February 22 Historical Memory and the South in Popular Culture

Cox, *Dreaming of Dixie*

W. Fitzhugh Brundage, "White Women and the Politics of Historical Memory in the New South, 1880-1920," in *Jumpin' Jim Crow: Southern Politics from Civil War to Civil Rights*, ed. by Jane Dailey, Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore and Bryant Simon (2000)

Recommended essays: Karen Cox, "The South and Mass Culture" and W. Fitzhugh Brundage, "Contentious and Collected: Memory's Future in Southern History," *Journal of Southern History* 75 (August 2009), 677-90 and 751-66 (e-journal)

February 29 Southern Progressivism; RECEIVE TAKE-HOME MIDTERM

MacLean, *Behind the Mask of Chivalry*

Gilmore, *Gender and Jim Crow*, 147-228

Recommended essay: Angela M. Hornsby-Gutting, "Manning the Region: New Approaches to Gender in the South," *Journal of Southern History* 75 (August 2009), 663-76 (e-journal)

March 7 **Lynching and the Jim Crow Justice System**
Feimster, *Southern Horrors*

Recommended essay: Amy Louise Wood and Susan V. Donaldson, "Lynching's Legacy in American Culture," *Mississippi Quarterly* 62 (Winter 2008/Spring 2009), 5-25 (e-journal)

SPRING BREAK

March 21 **A Vital Ferment; TAKE-HOME MIDTERM DUE**
Patricia Sullivan, "Southern Seeds of Change, 1931-1938," in *The New South: New Histories*, ed. by William Harris (2008)
In-class video: *Scottsboro: An American Tragedy*

Recommended essay: I can suggest readings for anyone wanting to do a book review and oral presentation this week.

March 28 **Labor and the Origins of the Civil Rights Movement**
Korstad, *Civil Rights Unionism*

Recommended essay: Jacqueline Jones, "Labor and the Idea of Race in the American South," *Journal of Southern History* 75 (August 2009), 613-26 (e-journal)

April 4 **The Civil Rights Movement**
Payne, *I've Got the Light of Freedom*, xiii-283

Recommended essays: Charles Eagles, "Toward New Histories of the Civil Rights Era," *Journal of Southern History* 66 (November 2000), 815-48 (e-journal) and Hall, "The Long Civil Rights Movement" (see April 11)

April 11 **The Civil Rights Movement**
Payne, *I've Got the Light of Freedom*, 284-441
Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, "The Long Civil Rights Movement and the Political Uses of the Past," *Journal of American History* 91 (March 2005), 1233-1263 (e-journal)

Recommended essays: Hall's footnotes are extensive and see the LCRM website: <https://lcrm.lib.unc.edu/voice/works/>

April 18 **Massive Resistance and the End of the Movement?**
Ashmore, *Carry It On*

Recommended essay: Peniel E. Joseph, "Rethinking the Black Power Era," *Journal of Southern History* 75 (August 2009), 707-16 (e-journal)

April 25 **The Sunbelt and the Suburbs; BIBLIOGRAPHY FOR FINAL ESSAY DUE**
Lassiter, *The Silent Majority*

Recommended essay: Matthew D. Lassiter and Kevin M. Kruse, "The Bulldozer Revolution: Suburbs and Southern History," *Journal of Southern History* 75 (August 2009), 691-706 (e-journal)

May 2 **The Contemporary South in Historical Perspective**
Moreton, *To Serve God and Wal-Mart*

May 4 **FINAL ESSAY DUE BY 5 P.M.**

Class policies and additional information:

Academic Integrity: I expect students in this course to live up to George Mason University's Honor Code, which states: "Student members of the George Mason University community pledge not to cheat, plagiarize, steal, or lie in matters related to academic work." I will pursue any concerns about academic dishonesty and will report suspected students to the University's Honor Board for disciplinary action, including a failing grade in the course. For guidelines on avoiding plagiarism, see <http://classweb.gmu.edu/WAC/EnglishGuide/Critical/plagiarism.html>.

Attendance and late paper policy: Students may miss a single class without penalty; however, even one absence is strongly discouraged and any additional absences will significantly affect the course grade. If you miss a class when you are supposed to give a presentation, there will be virtually no way to make up that part of the assignment. Please contact me well in advance of any necessary absence.

I will accept late papers with the penalty of half a letter grade for every 24-hour period past the deadline.

Office hours and appointments: Please feel free to schedule an appointment if you cannot make my office hours. I am also happy to answer quick questions before or after class or during our breaks, but I cannot linger long after 10 p.m. Email is the best way to reach me.

Accommodations: Students who require academic accommodations should contact me promptly and must make arrangements through the Office of Disability Services (ods.gmu.edu; 703-993-2474).

Other useful information:

Writing Center (writingcenter.gmu.edu): A114 Robinson Hall, 703-993-1200

Counseling and Psychological Services (caps.gmu.edu): 703-993-2380

Last day to drop without tuition penalty: Jan. 31

Last day to drop with tuition penalty: Feb. 24